The Cleveland Museum of Art

Renowned Museum Leader and International Scholar Dr. William Griswold Named 10th Director of the Cleveland Museum of Art

News Release
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Dr. Griswold will apply a lifetime of experience in America's top arts institutions to strengthen, distinguish, and expand the museum's influence as it enters its second century

CLEVELAND (May 20, 2014) – The Cleveland Museum of Art's Board of Trustees today voted unanimously to name Dr. William M. Griswold, a distinguished scholar, renowned curator and experienced museum leader, its next director. Griswold's confirmation comes at a unique time in the life of the institution, which recently completed a historic and comprehensive $350 million expansion project on time and under budget. As it approaches its 2016 centennial anniversary, the Cleveland Museum of Art is renown for the quality and breadth of its collection and its historic role as a leading American museum.

Dr. Griswold, 53, who is currently the director of the Morgan Library & Museum in New York City, will assume his duties in Cleveland as the museum's 10th director in early fall, 2014. He brings to the position a depth of experience gained in America's leading museums, including the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Minneapolis Institute of Arts and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, as well as an expertise in Italian drawings from the Renaissance and the 18th century.

"The Board of Trustees is thrilled with Bill Griswold's appointment," said Steven Kestner, Chairman of the Cleveland Museum of Art's Board of Trustees. "We couldn't have found a better, more experienced candidate and we're looking forward to Bill's leadership for years to come. Bill is joining the museum at an incredible moment in its history, with the additional capacity of a newly completed expansion and a 100th anniversary swiftly approaching. It is the perfect moment to begin his legacy of scholarship, innovation and community outreach."

During his tenure at the Morgan Library & Museum, Dr. Griswold spearheaded the growth of the Morgan's collections, exhibition program and curatorial departments, most recently adding Photography as a focus. He oversaw a number of important exhibitions and scholarly exchanges with leading international museums, including the Louvre, London's Courtauld Institute, Munich's Graphische Sammlung and Turin's Biblioteca Reale.

Dr. Griswold previously served as Director and President of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, from 2005 to 2007; Acting Director and Chief Curator of the J. Paul Getty Museum, in 2004 to 2005; and Associate Director for Collections at the Getty, beginning in 2001. Prior to joining the Getty, Dr. Griswold had been Charles W. Engelhard Curator and Head of the Department of Drawings and Prints

at the Morgan Library since 1995. From 1988 to 1995, he was on the staff of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, first as Assistant and then as Associate Curator in the Department of Drawings and Prints. Dr. Griswold earned his bachelor's degree at Trinity College, Hartford, Connecticut, and his Ph.D. at The Courtauld Institute of Art, London.

"It's an incredible honor for me to join the Cleveland Museum of Art, an institution I have long admired, so well-known for the quality of its collection and its fine tradition of community engagement," said Dr. Griswold. "I'm especially glad to be part of this world-renowned institution now, as it embraces its second century with an emphasis on becoming stronger, more relevant and more welcoming to the city of Cleveland, the nation and the world."

Following former director David Franklin's departure in October 2013, the museum has been led by Fred Bidwell, a long-standing member of the Board of Trustees, who along with fellow board members organized an executive search committee with specific qualifications in mind for its next director.

"The search committee set out to find a candidate who not only had an excellent history of scholarship and leadership, but a strong enthusiasm for Cleveland's diverse community and rich cultural resources and those qualities are exactly what we found in Bill," said Peter Raskind, chair of the committee. "We are glad to welcome Bill, and we believe his outstanding record of service in many of America's top museums beautifully qualifies him to lead the Cleveland Museum of Art into its second century."

Bidwell said, "It has been a privilege and a pleasure to broaden my service to the Cleveland Museum of Art. The museum has moved ahead beautifully during this time of transition, thanks to its fantastic staff, board, donors and members. I'm looking forward to working with Bill as a board member, having gained great new insight into the operations of the museum and the priorities of the people it serves."

The Cleveland Museum of Art's collection includes more than 45,000 objects and spans 6,000 years, and its Ingalls Library is the third-largest art research library in the United States, with 472,650 volumes. The museum employs a staff of approximately 400 professionals. The recently completed expansion and renovation project designed by Rafael Viñoly expanded the museum's space to 592,500 square feet in size, which includes 35,300 square feet of new gallery space.

Historically, the museum has showcased between 13 and 17 special exhibitions per year, staging temporary exhibitions that draw from its permanent collection as well as showcasing international loan shows. Annual community arts festivals include summer's Parade the Circle, the autumn Chalk Festival and a Winter Lights Lantern Festival. The museum is committed to public arts education and hosts many educational events throughout the year, including family days, school tours, intergenerational studio arts classes and the distance learning and Art to Go programs. It is also known for its extensive community outreach and engagement work, including listening and discussion sessions in under-served Cleveland neighborhoods to enhance the museum's cultural relevance, hospitality and service to the city.

The museum worked with executive search firm Russell Reynolds during the six-month international search that resulted in Dr. Griswold's appointment.

“Bill is a creative, thoughtful and caring leader, and the board and staff of the Morgan wish him and his partner Chris Malstead the very best in their new Cleveland adventure,” said Lawrence Ricciardi, President of the Board of Directors of the Morgan Library & Museum where Dr. Griswold currently serves as director.

“If I have to highlight just one of Bill's many accomplishments during his six-and-a-half years as Director at the Morgan, it would be the vibrant program of imaginatively conceived and critically acclaimed exhibitions that he and the curators have mounted, including partnerships with, among others, the Courtauld, Bodleian, Louvre, Bibliotheque Nationale de France, NYPL, Cambridge and the Los Angeles County Museum. I know that the Cleveland Museum of Art, one of America's great arts institutions, will benefit from Bill's vision, experience and creativity."

About the Morgan Library & Museum The Morgan Library & Museum began as the private library of financier Pierpont Morgan, one of the preeminent collectors and cultural benefactors in the United States. Today, more than a century after its founding in 1906, the Morgan serves as a museum, independent research library, musical venue, architectural landmark, and historic site. In October 2010, the Morgan completed the first-ever restoration of its original McKim building, Pierpont Morgan’s private library, and the core of the institution. In tandem with the 2006 expansion project by architect Renzo Piano, the Morgan now provides visitors unprecedented access to its world-renowned collections of drawings, literary and historical manuscripts, musical scores, medieval and Renaissance manuscripts, printed books, and ancient Near Eastern seals and tablets. For information about the Morgan Library, please contact Patrick Milliman, (212) 590-0310 or pmilliman@themorgan.org.

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About the Cleveland Museum of Art

The Cleveland Museum of Art is renowned for the quality and breadth of its collection, which includes more than 63,000 artworks and spans 6,000 years of achievement in the arts. The museum is a significant international forum for exhibitions, scholarship and performing arts and is a leader in digital innovations. One of the top comprehensive art museums in the nation, recognized for its award-winning Open Access program and free of charge to all, the Cleveland Museum of Art is located in the University Circle neighborhood.

The museum is supported in part by residents of Cuyahoga County through a public grant from Cuyahoga Arts & Culture and made possible in part by the Ohio Arts Council (OAC), which receives support from the State of Ohio and the National Endowment for the Arts. The OAC is a state agency that funds and supports quality arts experiences to strengthen Ohio communities culturally, educationally and economically. For more information about the museum and its holdings, programs and events, call 888-CMA-0033 or visit cma.org [1].

Museum Fact Sheet - May 2014 (539.99 KB PDF) [2]

Press Announcements [3]

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